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Kyoto Protocol: Bad Policy Based on Bad Science

Why Isn't the Administration Telling Us the Truth about the Science Behind this Treaty?

Tomorrow is Earth Day. The President may choose to celebrate the event by signing the Kyoto Protocol on Global Climate Change. Yet, more than 15,000 scientists signed a petition urging the U.S. government to reject the Kyoto treaty and any other similar proposal. Of the engineers, scientists, economists and other signatories of the petition, more than 40 percent hold doctorate degrees in their field. What's their reason for opposition? As they say:

"There is no convincing scientific evidence that human release of carbon dioxide, methane, or other greenhouse gases is causing or will, in the foreseeable future, cause catastrophic heating of the Earth's atmosphere and disruption of the Earth's climate. Moreover, there is substantial scientific evidence that increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide produce many beneficial effects upon the natural plant and animal environments of Earth."

And, so why would this Administration insist on holding the obviously flawed Kyoto protocol in such high public esteem? [See, also, a separate RPC paper, "The Gang That Couldn't Talk Straight Rides Again: Administration Contradicts its Own Estimates of Kyoto Treaty's Costs," 4/21/98, addressing the flawed economic assumptions behind the protocol.]

What is the consensus in the scientific community on whether human activity is contributing to the warming of our climate? There is none. But, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that warming and cooling of our climate is something that has gone on for a very long time and likely will continue to go on — with human actions perhaps playing a limited role.

What Does The Science Say?

Supporters of the climate change calamity theory gather strength from the 1995 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Summary for Policymakers, which said in part "...The balance of evidence suggests a discernable human influence on global climate." In fact, though, the 2,500 IPCC scientists did not contribute to or endorse the six-page "Summary for Policymakers." Indeed, there is evidence that the 1995 IPCC report was doctored to conform with the policy judgments contained in the Summary. Professor Frederick Seitz wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* on June 12, 1996, "In my more than 60 years as a member of the American scientific community, including service as president of both the National Academy of Sciences and the American Physical Society, I have never witnessed a more disturbing corruption of the peer-review process than the events that led to this IPCC report."

Dr. Seitz goes on in his article to note several deletions from the approved Chapter 8 draft that expressed doubts about "a discernable human influence" by scientists participating in the IPCC review process. They are:

1. "None of the studies cited above has shown clear evidence that we can attribute the observed [climate] changes to the specific cause of increases in greenhouse gases."

2. "No study to date has positively attributed all or part [of the climate change observed to date] to anthropogenic [man-made] causes."

3. "Any claims of positive detection of significant climate change are likely to remain controversial until uncertainties in the total natural variability of the climate system are reduced."

As a result of such manipulation of information, many in the scientific community have concluded that the report was altered to support the conclusions obtained by the "Summary for Policymakers" solely for political purposes.

Nowhere does the IPCC summary actually claim temperatures would rise between 1.8 and 6.3 degrees Fahrenheit over the next century. Rather, these numbers are the results of assumed scenarios and assumed climate responses from model calculations, according to Dr. Fred Singer in an article in the *Washington Times* on July 1, 1997. Dr. Singer goes on to say, "The report itself (page 434) specifically disclaims that studies of climate patterns can 'quantify the magnitude' of a green house gas effect on climate."

A review of the scientific literature measuring historical changes in the earth's climate reveals no genuinely long-term, consistent rise in temperature. Indeed, such a review indicates that Earth's temperature has varied over time up *and* down — gradually. A recent article in *Science* on February 27, 1998, noted, "The record shows that temperature variations are far greater during glacial periods (ice ages) than during interglacial periods. North Atlantic sea temperatures, for example, varied by as much as 3 to 4.5 degrees C during glacial periods 450,000 and 350,000 years ago, while they only varied by about 0.5 to 1 degree C during the interglacial period which fell in between."

The Kyoto Protocol is a Solution in Search of a Problem

If there is no convincing evidence that Earth's climate is changing drastically, and, if there is no discernable evidence that human activity is causing our planet's temperature to rise, why then the urgency? Perhaps because, as H.L. Mencken noted, "the urge to save humanity is almost always a false front for the urge to rule." This administration's policy on the matter of climate change is an urge to rule how people use energy, and demonstrates its longstanding opposition to the use of fossil fuels and its determination to wean the American people away from them — no matter what the cost. In summary, as Senator Craig noted on the Senate floor this week, "as more and more American scientists review the available data on global warming, it is becoming increasingly clear that the vast majority believe the commitments for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions made by the Administration in the Kyoto Protocol is an unnecessary response to an exaggerated threat."

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